

Fairfax County Park Authority

► Agency Mission

To set aside public spaces for, and assist citizens in, the protection and enhancement of environmental values, diversity of natural habitats, and cultural heritage; to guarantee that these resources will be available to both present and future generations; to create and sustain quality facilities and services that offer citizens opportunities for recreation, improvement of their physical and mental well-being, and enhancement of their quality of life.

► Trends/Issues

The Park Authority maintains and operates 386 parks on over 20,000 acres of park land. Fairfax County is becoming increasingly urbanized, with less available open space and increasing demands for park space, facilities, and park services. The Fairfax County Park Authority strives to inspire and sustain a passion for parks and leisure experiences that enhance our community's quality of life through dynamic and adaptive management of park open space, facilities, programs, and visitor services. Park facilities include recreational buildings, structures and infrastructures, trails and athletic fields, lakes and marinas, a working farm, historic sites, golf courses, miniature golf, a horticulture center, garden plots, stream valley lands, meadows, forests, equestrian facilities, tennis courts, playgrounds, and picnic areas.

To support these Park facilities, the Park Authority depends on support from various funding sources:

- Fund 001 (General Fund) provides for the management, operation, and maintenance of parks and park facilities such as community parks, athletic fields, nature centers, historic sites, trails, playgrounds, the horticulture center, and other publicly offered recreational facilities, as well as the management of stream valleys and natural areas. Funds are also utilized to maintain equipment and the vehicle fleet as provided through the Department of Vehicle Services. A major change in FY 2002 is the transfer of the Leisure Enterprises and Employee Fitness Center, General Fund functions, from the Department of Community and Recreation Services to the Park Authority.
- Fund 303 (General County Construction Fund) provides critical but routine funding for material, supply, and contract costs for the maintenance and repair of specific General Fund facility types including tennis courts, trails, and multi-use courts; specific contract maintenance to all Fairfax County Public Schools elementary and middle school athletic fields; and maintenance and facility equipment such as mowers, HVAC, and fire/security systems. The fund also provides non-routine funding to meet ADA requirements and the renovation and stabilization of park structures. Much of this funding was transferred in FY 2000 from Fund 001 and continues to function as the operating budget for these maintenance concerns.
- Fund 170 (Park Revenue Fund) is supported from fees and charges generated at Park Authority facilities. Under the Park Authority's state enabling legislation, revenues must be spent exclusively for Park purposes. There are eight recreation centers, seven golf courses, and three lake parks that are the primary Park Authority revenue generating facilities. Other facilities that provide revenue to the Park Revenue Fund are rental facilities, museum shops and nature centers.

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- Fund 370, Park Authority Bond Construction Fund, provides the majority of the funds for acquisition of land and construction and capital improvement of park facilities through the sale of General Obligation bonds.
- Fund 371, Park Authority Capital Improvement Fund, receives funds from proffers, donations, easements, interest, and transfers from the Park Revenue Fund (170). Fund 371 monies are primarily used for major maintenance and renovations at Park Revenue Fund facilities.
- Park Facilities Revenue Bonds, Series 1995 - The Park Authority issued revenue bonds in the amount of \$13.9 million on February 15, 1995. The Indenture places certain obligations on the Park Revenue Fund and Capital Improvement Fund to ensure the Authority's ability and readiness to repay the debt and to make needed repairs. The revenue bonds (together with other Park Authority funding) financed:
 - Twin Lakes Golf Course, a new 18-hole regulation course, driving range, clubhouse, and maintenance facility
 - Oak Marr Park's new nine-hole, par-three course, driving range, clubhouse, miniature golf course, and maintenance facility
 - Greendale Golf Course Clubhouse expansion
- Public-Private Partnership - In FY 1996, the Park Authority entered into a public-private agreement with a private firm to build and operate an 18-hole course at the Richard Jones Park with a percent of gross revenue returning to the Park Authority. This golf facility was opened successfully in May 1998 under the name of Pleasant Valley Golfer's Club.

Key Accomplishments (FY 1997 -FY 2001)

- Celebrated the Park Authority 50th anniversary.
- Established a foundation to serve as the agency's fundraising arm.
- Acquired 2,056 acres of land in FY 2000, the largest one-year increase in Park Authority's history.
- Integrated staff and program management functions of DCRS-Leisure Enterprises Division into the Leisure and Wellness Branch of the FCPA.
- Executed a playground renovation program to improve playgrounds that did not meet the revised playground safety standards.
- Improved and renovated athletic fields to meet the needs of girls' softball.
- Opened the first off-leash dog park.
- Received through donation two large properties with houses: Ashgrove and Lahey, which included valuable historic collections.
- Renovated multiple historic structures including Great Falls Grange, Hunter House (Nottoway Park), Stone Mansion (Stoneybrooke Park), Kidwell Farm, and various historic farm buildings (Frying Pan Park).
- Reconstructed a representative slave quarter structure at Sully Historic Site.

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- Restarted the summer intern program.
- Implemented a working relationship with DPWES for management of specified park construction projects.
- Created a more inclusive project scoping process resulting in a more thorough and accurate development plan.
- Developed a Park web site, which provides extensive information on all Park functions.
- Expanded free public events/performances such as Braddock Nights and the new Nottoway Nights and Lee District concert series.
- Opened the following new facilities: Water Mine at Lake Fairfax Park, a second 18-hole golf course at Twin Lakes Golf Course, nine-hole, par-three golf course and miniature golf at Oak Marr Park, and a miniature golf facility at Jefferson Golf Course.
- Opened new picnic pavilions at Burke Lake Park, Lake Fairfax Park, and Lake Accotink Park.
- Opened Pleasant Valley Golfer's Club, a public-private agreement with a private firm to build and operate an 18-hole golf course at Richard Jones Park.
- Developed the Northern Virginia Municipal golf Tee Time system in partnership with neighboring jurisdictions.
- Consolidated Park Authority and Department of Community and Recreational Services' class registration process.
- Initiated at Spring Hill RECenter a School Age Child Care facility in partnership with the Office for Children.
- Expanded fitness rooms at recreation centers, which included replacement of equipment, area enlargements, private training, and weight room attendants.
- Expanded centralized summer camp program to seventeen locations.
- Completed installation of the Fitness Network System (Fitlinxx) at the recreation centers.
- Implemented electronic check-in process at the RECenters.
- Implemented the latest version of ParkNet, the Park Authority's comprehensive business information system, on a new hardware platform based on current technology.
- Passed a \$75 Million Park Bond Referendum to acquire, develop, and equip new parks and renovate and improve existing parks and park facilities.

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Initiatives

- Complete development of a strategic plan to provide direction for the FY 2002- FY 2006 (five-year) period.
- Develop the new foundation's articles of incorporation and bylaws, recruit foundation board members, and develop a foundation strategic plan.
- Plan for development of Lorton property designated to be donated by the Board of Supervisors.
- Continue the design and development of the West County Recreation Center to meet the FY 2004 completion date.
- Implement multi-year tennis court, multi-use court, and trail renovation plans.
- Replace the water wheel and main drive shaft at Colvin Run Mill.
- Complete the core renovations at Lake Accotink Park.
- Expand the class registration options to include internet registration.
- Plan for development of a Burke Lake miniature golf facility.
- Expand the Water Mine facility at Lake Fairfax.
- Plan for redevelopment of South Run Field House.
- Continue to promote new revenue producing initiatives to fund identified maintenance needs of an aging inventory of facilities.
- Refund the 1995 Revenue Bonds
- Develop the FY 2002 – FY 2003 Annual Work Plan for Park Development which guides development of project work efforts.
- Assume responsibility for the maintenance of 473 FCPS athletic fields to improve maintenance, safety standards, and increase user satisfaction.

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Challenges

Community Involvement

The Fairfax County Park Authority seeks to become an active partner in building community. However, engaging the community will be challenging - surveys show that while many citizens are interested, a much smaller number actually participate in park planning and park communication forums. There are barriers to the use of Park Authority facilities and services located in parks. Barriers to participating in planning and using parks include lack of awareness, transportation constraints, and income constraints.

Stewardship

Having amassed extensive acreage and resources, the Park Authority now has the challenge of taking a full inventory of these assets and actively managing them to preserve and protect their value. In managing parklands, the agency must balance its dual responsibilities of preserving the resources and acting as a developer to create the wide range of recreational facilities citizens desire. It is particularly challenging for the Park Authority to build quality facilities in the least expensive and quickest way, while modeling responsible stewardship practices to the community.

Land Management

The past view that such protected conservation areas would naturally take care of themselves has evolved to a recognition that all land holdings require active management. Problems such as overabundance of deer, invasive plant species and degradation from adjacent development are taking a toll on parkland, requiring active intervention to preserve park habitats and wildlife.

Leisure Opportunities

The Park Authority is reliant in its Revenue Fund on just two sources of revenue – golf courses and RECenters – which together accounted for 87 percent of the Fund's revenues in FY 2000. This concentration of revenues makes the Fund vulnerable to external factors beyond the Park Authority's control, such as bad weather, economic downturns, or changes in nationwide activity participation patterns.

Financial Framework

Changing economic conditions, the desire of citizens to have accessible and excellent recreational facilities, changing recreational opportunities, increased maintenance requirements, and limited land availability create major challenges for current funding sources. Challenges include:

- Finding and maintaining the balance between funding needs of revenue-generating parks and all other parks;
- Assessing and responding to market developments to assure the right combination of fee and free product offerings;
- Allocating limited bond and capital maintenance dollars among competing demands.

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Infrastructure and Capital Sustainability

By approving seven bond referenda over the past 50 years, Fairfax County citizens have invested over \$300 million to purchase parkland and develop facilities in more than 370 parks. Combined with the thousands of acres of land received without cost as a result of development proffers and donations, the inventory of Fairfax County's parks now well surpasses \$500 million. Many facilities, roads, and parking surfaces are several decades old and need major repairs or replacement. A public survey conducted as part of the 1998 Park Bond Referendum found that citizens identified refurbishing old parks as the agency's most important priority. Additionally, capital equipment required to properly maintain the agency's expanding property is aging. The current capital equipment inventory replacement value is \$4,190,000. There are 125 units included in the current inventory, and 69 percent of these units is 10 years old or older; however, there is no systematic program to provide for current and future replacement.

Capacity for Growth and Change

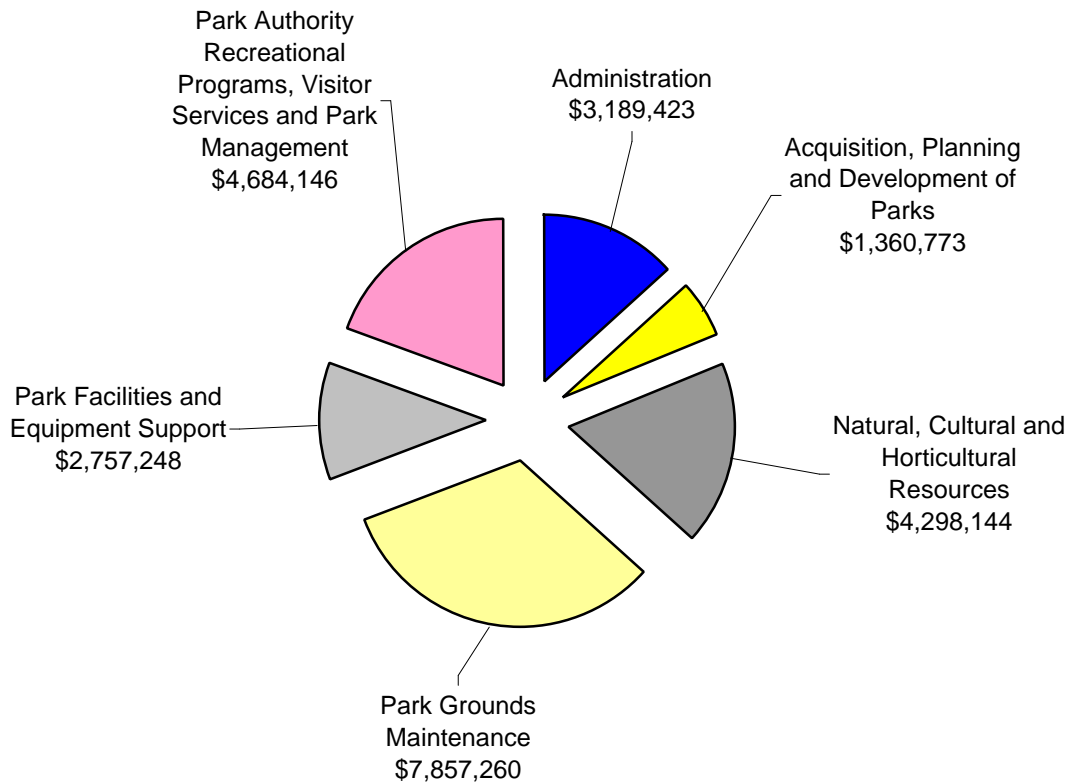
The Park Authority's merit workforce has an above average concentration of workers in their 40's and a below-average concentration of younger workers in their 20's. The imminent exodus of baby boom generation staff poses major challenges to the organization. The Park Authority must also strive for additional racial and ethnic diversity as the County's workforce becomes more heterogeneous. In addition, there is a need for workforce training and development in a greater variety of disciplines than was previously required. Specialized knowledge is required in areas such as information technology, resource management, turf management and fitness, to name a few. The work environment is increasingly complex and there are greater expectations from park users.

► **Summary of All Agency CAPS**

CAPS Number	CAPS Title	CAPS Net Cost	CAPS Number of Positions/SYE
51-01	Administration	\$3,189,423	48/48
51-02	Acquisition, Planning and Development of Parks	\$1,360,773	31/31
51-03	Natural, Cultural and Horticultural Resources	\$4,298,144	94/91.5
51-04	Park Grounds Maintenance	\$7,857,260	145/145
51-05	Park Facilities and Equipment Support	\$2,757,248	38/38
51-06	Park Authority Recreational Programs, Visitor Services and Park Management	\$1,606,363	36/36
TOTAL Agency		\$21,069,211	392/389.5

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Total FY 2002 Adopted Budget Expenditures = \$24,146,994

Total FY 2002 Adopted Budget Net Cost = \$21,069,211